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and the
Extension of Christianity

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World Facts and the Extension of Christianity

By Cornelius H. Patton

MISSIONARY leaders and those who study the currents of the world's life from the standpoint of Christian progress are agreed that, as a result of the Great War, we have swung into a new and distinct era in the matter of extending the Christian religion over the earth. They consider it imperative that the American Churches, appreciating this fact, should assume far larger responsibilities than in the past, that they should stand ready to lead off in the sublime task of establishing Christ's rule over the nations. The facts and considerations underlying this conviction are as follows:

1. *Intensified Nationalism.* Throughout the world the nations are coming to a fresh realization of their destiny and power. We are witnessing an assertion of nationality unparalleled in modern times. This is the mightiest force now at work in the world, next to religion. What shall be the relation of the two? Is nationalism to be the concentrated egotism of the people? Are we to have "megalomaniac nationalism, a nationalism made aggressive by prosperity," to use H. G. Wells' challenging phrase? Or can we have a

nationalism which recognizes the restraints of liberty, with proper regard for the welfare of other states? In all parts of the world people are turning to democracy for self-realization, and this is well, since democracy is the political expression of Christ's doctrine of the brotherhood of man—every man counting for one because God made him one. But democracy is working out badly in certain sections of the earth. Absurd and dangerous views of democracy are being handed to backward peoples. Horrible crimes are being committed in its name. How shall we make democracy safe and sound? It is for the Church of God to say.

2. *The Unity of the World.* Notwithstanding the intensified nationalism of our time, the world is one, indisseverable. To the unity of creation ("God hath made of one") is now added the unity of socialization. Steam and electricity have so bound us together in a system of economic and social interdependence that there is no escape. Nationalism cannot be maintained by exclusiveness. A policy of isolation is as futile as it is wrong. The nations are an organism like the human body, "and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee." Internationalism is the completion of nationalism; it is the inevitable organization of the world's life for the ending of war, for mutual protection and service. Said a prominent British educator: "The world is now *one* in fact. Untold miseries and catclysms worse far than that from which we are emerging, lie in store for

us, unless the world becomes one also in heart. The hope of the world lies, in sober truth, with those who preach peace to them that are afar off as well as to those that are nigh."

3. *The Recognition of Christianity as the Solution of the World's Woe.* Prominent statesmen, educators, journalists, captains of industry unite in holding that the Church, with her gospel of goodwill and brotherhood, is the only hope of the world. Never has there been such a chorus of appeal to God's people to get together and to get busy extending the lines of Christian influence and power. This was the heart of that great appeal of Lloyd George and the other British premiers in their New Year's Day message to the British people in 1921. Said Frank A. Vanderlip, upon returning from Europe recently, "The fundamental need of Europe is spiritual." By common consent the greatest utterance coming out of the war was the dying word of Edith Cavell, "I perceive that patriotism is not enough." Today the rulers of the world are saying, "Patriotism is not enough."

4. *The Friendly Attitude of Governments.* Not all governments are cordial towards Protestant Christianity; but there is an increasing number of powers, great and small, which look to the Boards of the Protestant Churches to aid them in their gigantic task. The Georgian nation has let it be known that they must have missionaries and missionary institutions, if they are ever to stand alone. The Bulgarian Parliament, at the instigation of the King,

urges the establishment of an American Protestant Christian college at Sofia for the training of national leaders. The Japanese government is deeply concerned over the problem of religion and morals as a basis of national life, and encourages as not before the service of Christian churches and schools in their midst. Great Britain, long the friend of missions, outdoes herself in offering aid to Christian schools in her colonies in India and Africa, and elsewhere. The American government officials in the Philippines are working side by side with the missionaries of a dozen boards. Church and State, while maintaining separation, will co-operate increasingly for the saving of society. "The work of the conference is the work of religion and of the church," said Prince Tokugawa at the Washington Conference in 1921.

5. *The New Status of the Missionary.* Under these highly favorable conditions, the foreign missionary has come into a new status of influence and prestige. Increasingly he is recognized as a world leader, the true internationalist, the friend of civilization, the savior of states. As Dr. Percy Dearmer, of London, expresses it, "In a quite definite way they (the missionaries) are becoming the inner statesmen of the new world; and the wisest rulers and administrators nowadays take ample counsel of them." "Do nothing without Peet," cabled the United States Government to Ambassador Morgenthau at Constantinople, during a critical period of the war, Peet being the treasurer of the American Mission.

Prominent Chinese officials, like Governor Yen of Shansi, statedly consult missionaries as to sanitation, education, and questions of public policy. After decades of misunderstanding, criticism and sometimes abuse the missionary is coming to his own.

6. *God's Spirit Is Moving upon the Masses.* This is the day of the "mass movement," by which villages, communities, castes as a whole seek admission to the Church. In India it has reached the proportions of a tidal wave. The problem is not how to make converts but how to care for the multitudes who press into the Church. Similar movements are developing in Africa, certain sections of China, and throughout Korea. These may become general at any time. With governments favorable and people eager, we may look for the rapid progress of Christianity in the riper fields.

7. *The Broadening of the Scope of Missionary Work.* In response to the new opportunities and demands, missionaries are developing new lines of approach and helpfulness. They preach and practice a Christianity for the whole man—body, mind and spirit. With moral redemption through Christ the invariable goal, they find new channels of usefulness opening on every side. Medical missions are taking on tremendous proportions. Industrial and agricultural education have come to the front as immensely useful, also athletics, and all forms of social service. This is a day of good works of many kinds converging upon Him who came "to give life and to give it abundantly."

8. *The Tragedy of the Near East.* The element of tragedy, present in all ages of the Church, has become exceedingly prominent in our time. Possibly in all missionary history there has been no such disaster as we have experienced in Persia and Turkey, as a result of the fanaticism of the Moslem, stimulated by the Great War. Not less than a million and a half Armenian Christians have suffered death because of their faith. The names of hundreds of noble pastors and teachers have been added to the roll of martyrs. Churches, schools, colleges, hospitals lie in ruins. The destruction of Smyrna is one of the world's greatest calamities. Today the Church of Christ is faced by the challenge of disaster as well as of success. Undoubtedly our faith needs the urge of opposition, and the call to steadfastness and self-sacrifice. The faith of Christendom is being tested "as by fire." Do we believe in Christ? Do we believe in His Church? An ancient mosque in Damascus was once a Christian Church. High up on one of the walls there remains to this day the inscription in Greek, "Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Do we believe that prophecy? Will we help make it true?

9. *The Eclipse of Europe.* We can no longer count upon continental Europe to assume any considerable part in the evangelization of the world. The great powers of the continent are bankrupt and broken. Europe has become a liability instead of an asset. England alone

emerges with the resources and the will to carry on in the great business of the Church. Christian England will do her best and will be a mighty factor in the future as in the past, but to prosperous and powerful America comes the call to assume the heavy end of the load. Can there be any question that God is calling upon us to lead off in this mighty undertaking. Whatever views we may hold as to our government's responsibility toward the rest of the world, the Church of America cannot escape her mandate from Almighty God.

10. *Protestantism Presents a Common Front.* The task is stupendous. One thousand million people remain to be reached with the Christian message. The powers of evil are deeply entrenched. The opposition is alert and strong. Clearly this is no time for Christians to pull apart. Under the stress of the world's need and the urge of Christian forbearance and love the Protestant Mission Boards of Europe and America have drawn together and today they present a common front. Without sacrificing the independence or the initiative of any, by means of national and international organizations it is possible to project great plans and to dispose our forces for the largest results. Each Board today plans its work in the light of the whole task and with reference to what the others are doing. Comity prevails in the matter of the occupation of territory; certain denominations are asked to assume responsibility for definite areas; participation in a large number of union enterprises, especially in the realm of higher

education, insures a balanced and effective presentation of the message. Native Christians today are being brought together in hearty co-operation and, in certain lands, in organic unity. In the older and better occupied fields Christianity is becoming naturalized; the Church is becoming indigenous. The ideal, long held, of "a self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating native church," is being realized under conditions of great promise. No longer does the missionary bear the brunt of the task; he is now working at the side of a devoted, aggressive and well trained body of native Christians. In every department—evangelism, education, medicine, industrialism, literature—the undertaking has taken on tremendous proportions. $40,000,000 was expended on this work in 1921. This is the most far-reaching and successful enterprise in the world. It is the great business of the Church.

What the Boards Are Asking

Do these facts indicate that the Church of Christ is entering upon a new era of world operations? Who can doubt that it is so, and that if we of the home churches are alert and faithful it will be an era of rapid progress, of successes more extraordinary than history has yet shown.

What, then, do the affiliated mission boards ask of the people of the churches?

Four Things

1. In the light of the world situation, we ask you to evaluate the work anew, to con-

sider its paramount importance in the life of the world, to insist that foreign missions shall not be crowded off into a corner and given the crumbs of the Church's beneficence. We ask you to consider it the *business*, not the charity of the Church.

2. We ask you to consider your denominational board as the unit among the forces of the Kingdom which has a right to look to you for loyal and generous help. Our plan and spirit of co-operation are such that you can best help the Kingdom by helping your own board. See to it that your board has its rightful place in the program of your local church, that it receives its appropriate share of the people's gifts, in full accord with the system of beneficence adopted by your denomination. See to it that the people know of this great work, and learn to love it through systematic study of its fields and operations. Read and circulate missionary books and magazines.

3. In case, through the failure of your church and others to meet their responsibility, your board is threatened with debt, stand ready at the end of the year to make an extra gift into its treasury. Do all that is asked of you and a little more. Be a second mile Christian.

4. We ask you to plan, at the earliest possible moment, as God prospers you, to make an *investment* in the foreign work of

your denomination. Aside from your regular help through the Church, look forward to the day when you can support your own missionary, when you can erect or equip a hospital, build a church, school, residence or, by some other method, of which the officers of your board will tell you, make your impress upon the world's welfare in some personal and sizeable way.

In a Word, Become a Capitalist For Christ.